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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000624

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/07/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: FUROR OVER ALLEGED ISRAELI 1967 EGYPTIAN POW
KILLINGS HEATS UP

Classified by Minister Counselor for Economic and Political
Affairs William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Paralleling the growing public outcry in Egypt over an Israeli documentary film accusing the Israeli military of massacring several hundred Egyptian POWs during the 1967 war, the GOE has ratcheted up its official reaction by threatening Israel with legal action if it does not investigate the charges leveled in the film. Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit reportedly relayed Egypt's anger over the allegations to Israeli Foreign Minister Livni on March 6, as both ministers were in Brussels for meetings. Israeli Ambassador Cohen was convoked to the MFA for a formal demarche on the matter, and Egyptian Parliamentarians have seized upon the issue to call for expelling Israel's envoy to Cairo and returning Egypt's Ambassador from Tel Aviv.

¶2. (SBU) Since the film's showing on Israeli television in late February, the public outcry in Egypt has become steadily more shrill, with some outspoken members of parliament making inflammatory statements and denunciations toward Israel, the Israeli Ambassador, and Israeli Infrastructure Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer, as the IDF Commander who was accused of overseeing the alleged killings of Egyptian POWs.

¶3. (C) Israeli Emboff Beni Sharoni told poloff March 7 that a visit scheduled for March 8 by Ben Eliezer had been postponed due to escalating bilateral tensions. Ben Eliezer, he said, is one of the GOI senior politicians with very close relations with President Mubarak and the GOE. Sharoni knew nothing about press reports in local papers saying that Egyptian Intelligence Chief Soliman had also postponed a trip to Israel due to the crisis. (Note: ORA Chief said that the story on Soliman cancelling travel was untrue, but speculated that the issue could impact the bilateral relationship if allowed to drag on much longer. End note)

¶4. (C) Sharoni confirmed press reports that the GOE requested an investigation into the allegations, but asserted that the accusations were groundless. Public calls for the "slaughter" of Israel's Ambassador to Cairo by a member of Egypt's Parliament were troubling, he said. Such comments prompted the Israeli MFA to convoke Egypt's charge d'affaires in Tel Aviv, to express concern over the remarks, and to assure the GOE that it would not ignore Egyptian concerns. (Sharoni noted that Egypt's Ambassador had been in Cairo for the past two weeks, but believed there was a "medical" reason, vice political one.

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